



30th Week of Ordinary Time and the Solemnity of All Saints – 29 October – 1 November  
Reflection: Mgr Daniel McHugh

***“You broke with idolatry when you were converted to God, and became servants of the real living God” (1 Thes 1:5-10)***

Soon we will be visiting the graves of loved ones and friends: priests and deacons will gather with parishioners and prayers similar to this will be said to begin the service in the cemeteries:

*“My dear friends, we gather today to pray for brothers and sisters whose bodies lie here in rest. They have passed from death to life in company with the Lord Jesus, who died and rose to new life, and are purified now of their faults. We pray that God may welcome them among all the saints in heaven”.*

After a reading from Scripture and a Litany of Saints, the short ceremony concludes with the Our Father and a prayer much as this:

*“Almighty God and Father, by the mystery of the Cross, you have made us strong; by the sacrament of the resurrection you have sealed us as your own. Look kindly upon your servants, now freed from the bonds of mortality, and count them among your saints in heaven”.*

And, the familiar prayer:

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

***R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.***

May they rest in peace.

***R. Amen***

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

***R. Amen***

Those present will then disperse to stand by the graves of their relatives to await the Blessing with Holy Water, at the gravestone. At this point, this is an appropriate prayer from the Book of Blessings:

*“O God by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest, bless this gravestone with which we mark the resting place of N.*

*May he/she have everlasting life and rejoice in you with your saints forever.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord”.*

**Monsignor Daniel McHugh**

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In the passage from the First Letter to the Thessalonians on the 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday St Paul writes: *“it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the Gospel, in spite of the great opposition all round you – people tell us .... how you broke with idolatry when you were converted to God and became servants of the real, living God; and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us.”*

It seems to me a most suitable reading leading into the Feast of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed where the opening prayer – the Collect – of the Mass reads:

*“Listen kindly to our prayers, O Lord, and, as our faith in your Son, raised from the dead, deepened, so may our hope of resurrection for your departed servants also find new strength ....”*

Meanwhile, a whole industry has grown up around Halloween as a time of fear, and darkness. A recent article in the Metro has this heading “The Fear Factor: Spookiest Villages in Europe Revealed.” The introductory paragraph has this invitation “so, where should you head if you want to do some ghost hunting this spooky season?” It goes on to name at least three in the UK, one being the spectacular ruins of Tintern Abbey, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Cistercian Monastery which I visited this past summer. I never dreamt of going there to find ghosts! Another Metro article was “My Spooky B&B”; strapline: Would I find ghosts during my nights at the former funeral home? Among the pictures illustrating the article was a skeleton, an embalming table and a medallion of the Sacred Heart Montmartre on a crucifix. The author concluded: *“I was surprised by the Chapel’s warm, comfortable peace and while I yearned for proof of an after-life, I wasn’t disappointed with my quiet, uneventful night’s sleep.”*

It seems to me our culture is way too into Halloween – the Event of All Hallows, All Saints – in ways that are unnerving and excessive, especially for impressionable young people. The celebration has been taken over by money-making schemes that play on people’s fears, and lack of knowledge of the person of Jesus risen, who offers us new life – beyond this earthly one. In the weekly vlog ‘Burning Bush’ we have chosen 2 pictures this weekend: one is of Christ in glory with all the Saints from St Thomas, Salisbury; another is of a stained glass window in St Editha’s Church, Tamworth; Jesus surrounded by the crowd and these words *“Come unto me and ye shall find rest for your souls”*, and again these words of Scripture *“Surely he hath borne our griefs; and carried our sorrows.”* In the Scripture reading for our vlog we have chosen Psalm 17 for the 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday: *“I love you, Lord, my strength”*. This relationship is what we celebrate at every Mass, especially on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November:

*In Him we have no fear; all our hope is in Him.*

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